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for Delmarva History and Culture
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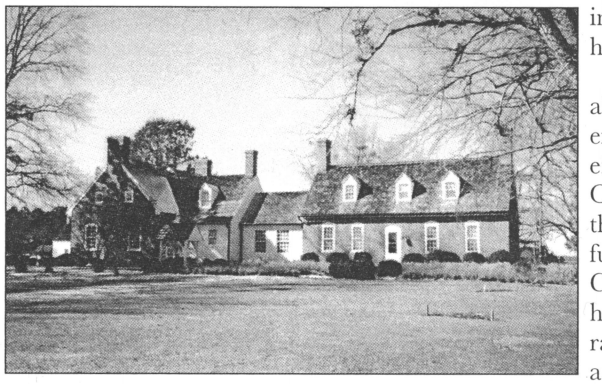
Shoreline

Vol. 20 • April/May 2013

For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University

Eventide in Old Somerset

By Amanda Tuttle, Nabb Research Center Graduate Assistant



Williams' Conquest, once known as Williams' Green, is one of the richest architectural gems in Somerset County. Originally patented by Michael Williams in 1663, the land was handed down in the Williams family over the next 70 years. During a time of movement and instability in 1733, Thomas Williams set out to build a permanent and stable home for himself and his family. Although construction began in 1733, it took decades to complete the house. Williams' Green remained in the Williams family until 1871 when it was sold to Daniel Middleton Jr., the sheriff of Somerset County at that time. In 1963, Phillip and Alice Stinchcomb bought the house and the surrounding 13 acres. The couple performed extensive restorations to the home and sold the property to Thomas George in 1973. The current owners, Randy and Smaro George, have researched all the furnishings in the home to ensure that they are historically accurate for the time period in which they were built.

Architecturally, Williams' Conquest is one of the most outstanding Colonial homes in Somerset County. The skillfully crafted interiors represent some of the most ambitious architectural work on the Eastern Shore. The Flemish bond brick exterior, arches and woodwork are a must-see for anyone interested in Delmarva's architectural history.

As though the history alone is not alluring enough, an evening of excellent entertainment will further entice a visit to this beautiful home. On Saturday, May 4, from 4-7 p.m., the Nabb Center will hold its annual fundraising event at Williams' Conquest in Marion, MD. Since the home is privately owned, this will be a rare opportunity to immerse oneself in a piece of Delmarva history. While listening to period music and participating in a silent auction, guests will enjoy a variety of delicious food, including a raw oyster bar, as well as mint juleps and an open bar. Tickets are $75 and all the proceeds go directly to the Nabb Research Center to help aid in our future endeavors.

For more than 30 years, the Nabb Center has continued to expand its programs and resources, offering a plethora of assistance to the public and Salisbury University students. Donations from the community and our dedicated members are a vital part of our existence. Please join us and support the Nabb Center while also visiting one of the earliest surviving Somerset homes. Tickets are sold at the Nabb Center and must be purchased by Tuesday, April 23. Contact the Nabb Center at 410-543-6312. We hope to see you there!

Calamus Gut and a Woman Named Narcissus

By Andrea Ullrich

Place names have changed over the decades as families have moved in and out of areas, leaving their imprint on the landscape. Worcester County, MD, is one of those areas with a myriad of unusual names – names usually known only to the inhabitants of the local area.

Growing up in rural Worcester County, I frequently heard some of these peculiar names. The area where I lived was Taylorville, between Berlin and Ocean City. Gum Point Road ran through this area, bordered on one side by Turville Creek, which itself has had a variety of different names over the centuries. Today, it abuts the land of South Ocean Pines.

In the 1890s, a local woman named Narcissus Clark Layton owned much of the property along Turville Creek. She had purchased the land for $105 – probably using the money from the pension her husband Franklin David Layton had received as a result of a Civil War injury. Grandfather Charles Henry Clark's eldest sibling Anna Levenia Clark, whom we all called Aunt Venie, also owned a small house on the north side of Gum Point Road, set back in the woods in a section referred to by my mother as Calamus Gut. I remember walking back into those woods as a child, but did not see the old house foundation my mother said was still there. When I was 6, in 1959, my family moved to Gum Point Road. It is interesting – to me at least – that both lines of my mother's ancestors had family who lived there, and that we were able to continue that tradition because my Kansas-born father loved the water. Interestingly, I came upon a reference to the calamus plant reading my Bible recently; I decided to look up information on the plant online. Up popped an entry for *acorus calamus*, which indicated the plant is a perennial to the wetlands and is used medicinally. Indeed, the calamus plant appears to have been a medicinal plant that no doubt had "healing" powers for the locals near Turville Creek.

It is upsetting to think the name of the geographical area known to my family (and others I'm sure) as Calmaus Gut will

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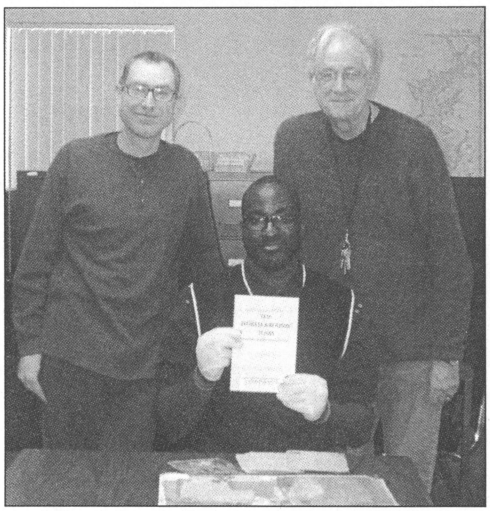
Early Childhood Education in Salisbury: The Commentaries of Mary Humphreys

By Jason Illari



It took nearly six years for Salisbury alumni Jason Illari and Dameon Gibbs to complete their published work *The World Around Them: Commentaries Of An Early 20th Century School Teacher*. The *Commentaries*, as they have come to be known, consist of over 100 hand-written pages by Miss Mary Elizabeth Humphreys of Salisbury (b.1881-d.1975). The original manuscripts are held at the Nabb Research Center and examine mostly the science of early childhood education and also general philosophy. One of her thoughtful excerpts is included here:

> "Nothing is more dangerous to the health of the intellect, nothing is more prejudicial to the culture of the heart, than the habit of looking at particular objects and events in detachment from the great whole of life," are the words of Froebel in his commentary of the *Mowing Grass Song*. The object of this song is to teach the child that through activity everything in life is related – that is, all of life is so bounded together that everything depends upon something else.
>
> Life is a process. Process implies relationship, and to think of either brings before us the idea of dependency. They go hand in hand. We cannot separate the little events of life from the greater ones for life is a unity. Whether the events be of little or great importance they are not to be ignored for they help to make up a process-the great process of life.
>
> Such is the relationship of life that our health of today depends upon our care of it in the past: Our life has its effect upon some other lives, for no one lives for himself alone. So it is all through life. It is all connected.
>
> We are the product of our epoch, our race, and our environment. These are the three factors of which we are the product.

Miss Humphreys was one of Delmarva's earliest proponents of early childhood education. A document published by the Bureau of Education in 1914 inventories all schools throughout the United States, and "Miss Elizabeth Humphreys Kindergarten" in "Salisbury, Maryland" is noted; the Salisbury school is one of only six kindergartens listed in Maryland. In *The World Around Them*, Illari and Gibbs laboriously transcribed and edited Humphreys' papers and also provided introductory remarks about the life of Humphreys, as well as supplementary research materials in the appendices. Delmarva historians, educators, and even students of philosophy and ethics should find the *Commentaries* a fascinating read. Copies of their book can be ordered by searching for the authors on Amazon.com.

After graduating from SU with an M.A. in history, Jason Illari completed his graduate certification in museum studies from George Washington University. After serving as curator at Poplar Hill Mansion in Salisbury, he worked for the City of Bowie Museums from 2007-2010. Currently residing in Carrol County with his wife Rachel and son Daniel, he serves as grants administrator for the Fire Museum of Maryland in Lutherville, MD.

Dameon Gibbs holds a B.A. in anthropology and an M.A. in classical studies; he served as the lead transcriber for the Humphreys project when the manuscripts were first discovered.

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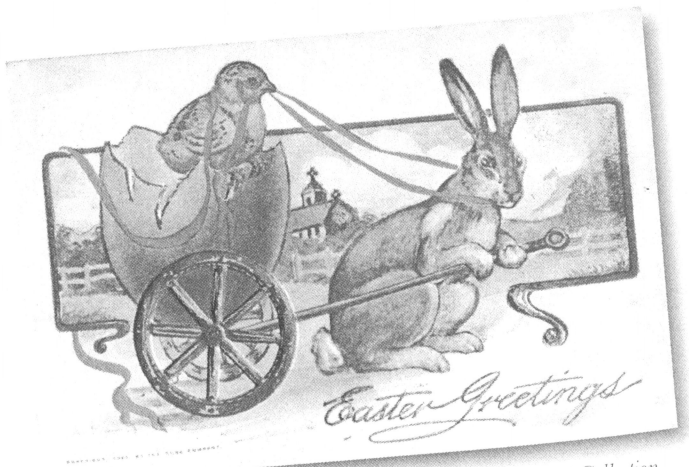
Calamus Gut and a Woman Named Narcissus

be lost to history. I haven't come upon the name Calamus Gut in any old documentation so far, so I thought I should preserve this area's name by writing an article. Calamus Gut is located about ¾ of a mile down Gum Pont Road, on the north side of the road, set back from the current paved road about 400-500 feet. Part of our property on the north side included a lagoon, which probably extended further back into the woods in earlier years. Not far from where we lived was another colorful section known as Hog's Skull.

Names like Calamus Gut and Hog's Skull are locations seldom heard nowadays. There are countless other similarly peculiar names on the rural Eastern Shore that were once common names, but are now forgotten except by a few old-timers.

Andrea Ullrich, an Eastern Shore native, and her husband John now reside in Heathsville, VA



Early 20th century Easter image from the LesCallette Postcard Collection

100th Year Anniversary of Woodrow Wilson's First Inauguration: The Victory Parade in Camden District No. 13 Salisbury, Maryland

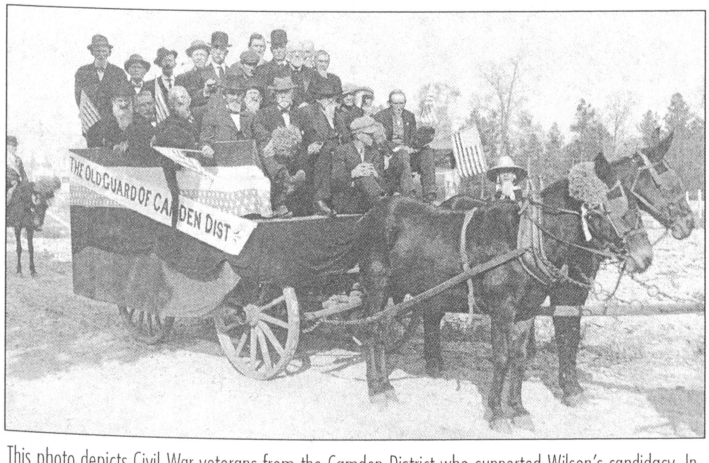
By Amanda Tuttle, Nabb Research Center Graduate Assistant

The United States presidential election of 1912 was a rare four-way contest between the Republican, Democrat, Progressive and Socialist parties. Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, would eventually sweep the election and win a crushing majority of 40 states. Locally, Wilson was considered the best candidate for the needs of the Delmarva region. Wilson's name was prevalent throughout the papers of the region, and, in many cases he was championed as the best choice for the future of America. Many of the articles focused on "Wilson Clubs," which were clubs of men who gathered to discuss and promote the candidacy of the former New Jersey Governor. Due to the education he received from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Wilson felt connected to Maryland. In 1885, Wilson graduated with a doctorate in political science and history, which eventually inspired him to run for president. Over 48 percent of Maryland voters cast their ballots in favor of Wilson, and the Camden district in Salisbury reflected that result.

These photos are a part of the Nutters Election House Collection located at the Nabb Research Center. It is believed that these pictures were taken during the Camden District's Fourth of July Parade, which celebrated the election of Woodrow Wilson as the 28th president of the United States. The parade was the largest ever to be held in the city until that time. A newspaper article clipping, which lacks the author and the name of the newspaper, quoted local resident J. Herman Williams Sr.: "Every election district gathered separately in its own area. It was at that time the biggest parade the town had ever had. We called it the Clean Sweep Parade, because Democrats won everywhere, nationally and locally."

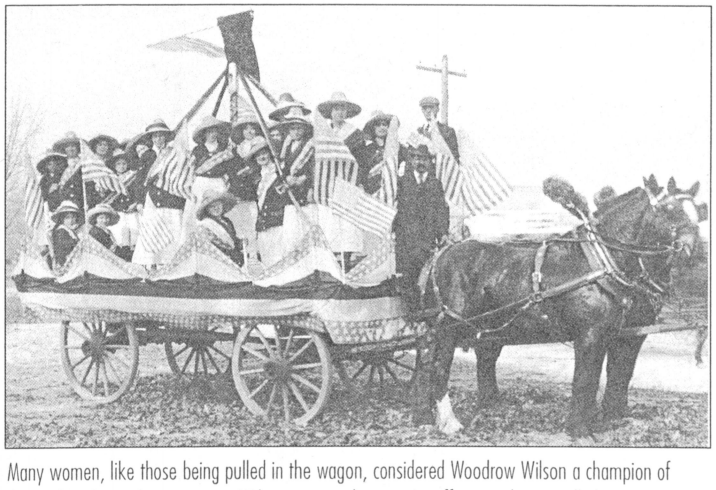
The widespread support for Wilson in the Delmarva area could have been a result of Wilson's campaign desire to limit federal powers. Wilson supported states' rights and promised to pass legislation that would protect America's smaller businesses from monopolized economic powers. Wilson stated in a letter written to a friend that "Power consists in one's capacity to link his will with the purpose of others, to lead by reason and a gift of cooperation." His legislative record proved to be popular both with America's common man and with those residents of the Camden District.

Only three children are identified in the photo: The front row includes Lee Lankford on the far left, William Bounds on the right, and the young girl directly behind Bounds is Joanna Lankford.



This photo depicts Civil War veterans from the Camden District who supported Wilson's candidacy. In the photograph are Clarence Brewington, Alex Hearn, Humphrey Rounds, William Levi Laws and Bill Trader. Their placements are unknown.

Only one automobile was used in the parade; it contained the newly elected Salisbury Mayor William F. Bounds and the previous mayor Charles E Harper. Senator C.R. Disharoon was second from the rear. On the car is a flag with a picture of Wilson and the date 1912. The brooms attached to the front of the car reiterate Wilson's and the Democratic Party's "clean sweep" of the nation.



Many women, like those being pulled in the wagon, considered Woodrow Wilson a champion of their rights. During his campaign, Wilson promoted women's suffrage and eventually became a pivotal player in the success of achieving the female vote. The wagon's banner reads "WILSON 40 STATES." No one predicted the extent of Wilson's campaign popularity, and many were amazed at Wilson's ability to succeed in all but eight states.

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Exhibits and Events - Spring 2013

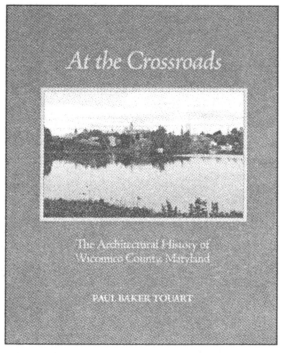
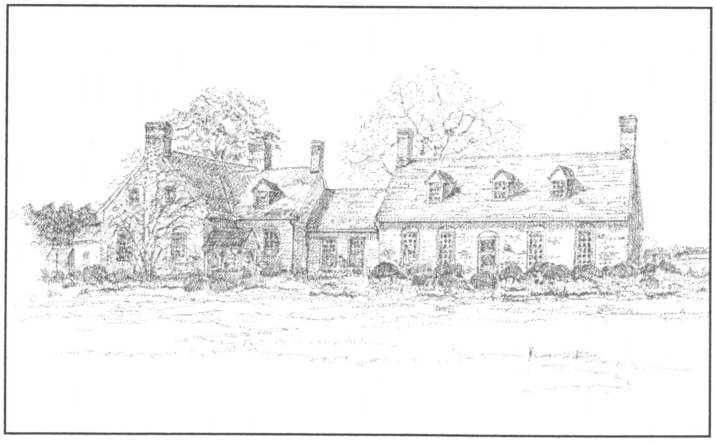
Exhibit Nabb Gallery
February 4-May 10, MWF 1-4 p.m.
Haitian Migrant Farmworkers on the Eastern Shore: A Historical Photo Document

Capture a rare glimpse into the lives of Haitian migrant farmworkers through the compelling photographs and field notes of documentary photographer Phil Decker, who worked in the mid-1980s as an outreach worker for migrant farmworkers in Salisbury. This exhibit and archive provides the Nabb Research Center with a significant historical document on the origin of the Eastern Shore's Haitian community, many of whom fled political and economic upheaval in Haiti in the '70s and '80s. Coming to the United States, they picked vegetables in the fields of the Eastern Shore. Decker's photos depict a farmworker crew's life in Florida, on the road, in the fields, in the labor camp and in town.

Annual Fundraising Event: Near Marion, MD
Saturday May 4, 4-7 pm
Eventide in Old Somerset
Tickets $75

Join us in historic Somerset County, MD, for an elegant evening of fabulous food, music, potent potables and silent auction at Williams' Conquest (circa 1733) near Marion, Maryland. This beautiful, Colonial home constructed with Flemish bond brick still retains its original interior woodwork and molding (pictured at right). Tickets will be available in early spring. Call 410-543-6312 for information.

Available at the Nabb Center
At the Crossroads: The Architectural History of Wicomico County, Maryland
By Paul Baker Touart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